

# Ealing post-16 route planner



London Borough of  
**Ealing**



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**“Your  
journey.  
Your  
choices.  
Your  
future.”**



## **Foreword**

Ealing Council is delighted to launch its first Post-16 Route Planner, a guide that showcases the fantastic range of courses and opportunities across the borough. This guide is created to support you as you take your next steps into further education, training, and future careers.

The borough is home to a vibrant, diverse community of young people with extraordinary talents and potential. The council is committed to ensuring that you and your peers have the information, opportunities, and support you need on leaving year 11 to thrive, whether you're thinking about continuing school, vocational training, or going into a professional work environment. This guide brings together the key options available to you here in the borough including many schools and colleges that specialise in providing tailored support to help you fulfil your ambitions and goals.

Choosing your next steps after year 11 can feel exciting, challenging, and sometimes a little overwhelming but this guide is here to help you. I encourage you to use this guide to ask questions, to discuss options with people around you: your teachers, family/carers and to discover new opportunities, and plan a route that reflects your ambitions and interests. Your future is full of promise, and the council is proud to support you as you take your next steps with confidence.

**Wishing you every success on your journey ahead.**

Councillor Blerina Hashani



# Jobs – the local picture

## Economic growth and future job opportunities in Ealing

The borough is experiencing rapid transformation driven by significant investment, more people with the right skills and major regeneration. With strong transport links, thriving local industries, and a young, diverse population, the borough is well placed to access growing job opportunities in West London over the next decade. In recognition of this, the council and its partners developed and launched [Ealing's Jobs & Skills Strategy 2024-2029](#).

Large scale development projects in Southall, Ealing Broadway and Acton coupled with significant investment in the industrial areas along Great Western Avenue, are expected to deliver thousands of new jobs, extensive new commercial space, and a wider range of opportunities for residents entering post-16 education. These changes will shape the employment landscape that you will enter as you begin choosing the pathway that's right for you, be it an apprenticeship, further education or employment.

## Key growth areas in the borough offering strong career prospects

- **Health and social care**

A major and growing sector with sustained demand for skilled workers, including roles in nursing, allied health professions, care work, mental health support, and community wellbeing services.

- **Construction and the human-made surroundings**

The borough is experiencing a boom in regeneration projects with redevelopment taking place across its town centres, and major housing projects/infrastructure improvements in the pipeline. This provides opportunities from skilled trades and project management to engineering and environmental design.

- **Digital, tech and creative industries**

The borough is part of London's expanding digital ecosystem, which is creating opportunities in software, media, cybersecurity, digital marketing, and emerging creative technologies.

- **Hospitality, retail and tourism**

The borough continues to regenerate its high streets and cultural centres, which is creating opportunities in customer service, events, catering, and leisure services providing residents with entry-level employment with the opportunity to develop key skills and earn qualifications.

- **Sustainability, green skills and low carbon industries**

Growing investment in climate action and green infrastructure is creating roles linked to energy efficiency, environmental management, sustainable transport and developing new ways to design, reuse, and recycle products to minimise waste.

- **West Tech London (life sciences and innovation)**

In partnership with Imperial College London and Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation the borough is launching a West Tech Skills and Training Hub to inspire young people to pursue careers within the life sciences and innovation sectors.

### **Why this matters for your future**

The borough's economic growth is on an upwards trajectory which means more choices and opportunities for you and your peers. Whether you prefer hands on technical training, academic study, or learning on the job, there are options for you.

Studying courses such as English, maths, digital skills, sustainability, and employability will help you access the widest range of pathways moving forward.

### **Looking ahead**

Ongoing regeneration and employer partnerships across the borough mean that by the time you complete your courses, the borough will offer:

- a wider range of apprenticeships, including in digital, health, construction, and public services
- more entry level roles linked to local employers
- expanded work experience and skills programmes through schools, colleges, and community learning providers
- clearer progression routes to higher level study and career or employment opportunities

The borough's focus on creating inclusive, sustainable growth means that you and your peers from every background can access high quality education, training, and employment opportunities.



## How this route planner can help you

Leaving year 11 and thinking about what to do next is an important time in your life. Hopefully you will feel excited about what's next and the opportunities ahead, and there are lots! However, you may feel slightly anxious or confused about the key decisions you'll have to make in the coming weeks and months, which is perfectly understandable and you're not alone.

This guide is full of information to help you make the best decisions about what you do next. You might find it helpful to go through it with a parent, carer, teacher, or careers adviser to help you make the best plan. You can also get support from [CONNEXIONS - Young Ealing](#) a local organisation which provide further careers information, advice and guidance for young people. The borough is a great place to study and train and by making the right decisions now, you can take full advantage of the opportunities as they present themselves later.

At the time of writing all information and sources were checked for accuracy. However some time might have passed from when this was published to when you're reading it so please check any opportunities with providers themselves.



## What's expected of you when you leave year 11

Did you know that you have to stay in some form of learning until you are 18?

It's a requirement by law that all young people in England must continue in education or start training until they are 18. This will give you the best chance of developing the skills and gaining the knowledge that employers and universities are looking for. When you leave year 11 the main options are:

- carry on studying at a school, college or be educated at home
- start a work based learning programme such as an apprenticeship
- start full time work alongside part time learning which leads to a recognised qualification
- volunteering for a minimum of 20 hours a week alongside part time learning which leads to a recognised qualification

### What if I don't get a grade 4 in GCSE maths and/or English?

You will need to retake these, as part of your post-16 study programme, until you pass or turn 18. You can find out more about this from your school, college or independent training provider.



## Choosing the right pathway

It's important to consider what suits you best when making decisions about your future, as these choices can open up or limit options later on. For example, university courses often have specific entry requirements, and some careers follow clearly defined pathways to qualification. Taking the time to explore your options and seek advice will help you feel confident in choosing the next steps that are right for you.

There are a number of things you should look at when choosing what to do:

- do you already have ideas about what you might want to do in the future? If you are aiming for a university course, find out if specific subjects are required and at what grades you will need. Do any of the careers you're thinking about need any specific qualifications?
- think about what you enjoy, your favourite subjects at school. What are your interests outside of school? Do you need to achieve any specific grades to get on to courses you're interested in?
- there are a broader range of courses to choose from year 12. Explore courses you may not have had the option of studying at GCSE (please see subject matrix – page 32). What do the new subjects involve?
- take time to discover how you best learn, whether that's through reading, hands-on experiences, or a mix of both. Understanding your own learning style can help you make choices that bring out your strengths and build your confidence.
- if you have special educational needs and/or a disability, be clear about the support that helps you succeed and talk about this with the settings you are interested in.
- where would you like to go? Does a specific school or college offer activities or facilities that you are specifically interested in? Have you considered whether you would like to attend sixth form, a college, start employment or join an independent training course?
- have you thought about how long it takes you to travel to your next potential setting and any related travel expenses? How good is your time keeping? It's important to consider as this could be your journey for the next 2 years.

### What else can help you decide?

It is important that the decision you make is the right one for you, however, at 15 to 16 years old it's hard to know exactly what that is. But it's important you start doing some research regardless and looking at what's out there, including potential careers and courses. Here are some proactive things you can be doing:

- go to open days or open evenings, they're a great opportunity to visit sixth forms and colleges, especially during the year 11 autumn term, to find out about the courses on offer, and speak to staff and students

- attend careers and skills fairs, these are ideal for meeting colleges, training providers, apprenticeship providers, employers, and careers advisers
- get advice from teachers or careers staff at your school, or contact [CONNEXIONS - Young Ealing](#) which offers advice, guidance and support and has specialist knowledge of options within the borough and its surrounding areas
- discuss your ideas, talk to parents or carers, teachers, family and friends to get feedback on your choices and what you are thinking
- look at career websites that offer job quizzes, subject-linked careers, job profiles and different routes into jobs. Examples include:
  - [National Careers Service](#)
  - [Prospects](#)
  - [Careerpilot](#)

If you really aren't sure about what you want to do in the future then consider studying a broad range of subjects, which you are good at and enjoy, so that you can decide later. There will always be future opportunities to change direction and alternative routes to get you to where you want to be, but thinking about your future now could make life easier in years to come.



# Year 11 timetable

## September – December (autumn term)

This is when you should start researching your post-16 options if you haven't done so already. You can:

- explore career websites e.g.  
[Post-16 options \(Career Pilot\)](#)  
[Post-16 options \(National Careers Service\)](#)  
[Post-16 options \(UCAS\)](#)
- speak to teachers and family about your ideas or for help
- use your school career resources to get ideas
- attend 1-1 careers session with the school careers

Book onto sixth form and college open evenings/events.

Explore sixth form and college websites (please see pages 30-31 and 36-40) identifying available courses, application deadlines and entrance requirements.

Attend sixth form and college open events.

Start to apply to sixth forms or colleges. Sixth forms are likely to have earlier deadlines e.g. January/February. College deadlines can be later in the spring term and sometime cross over into the summer term. Advice is to get applications in as early as possible and to make a minimum of 3. Always have a backup plan!

September /  
October

October /  
November

December

## January – March (spring term)

Continue to research options and seek advice from teachers about anything you don't understand, for example, the difference between sixth form and college, or the difference between BTECs, T levels and A levels.

Continue to apply to sixth forms and colleges.

Request to link with the school careers adviser for a 1-1 careers session if you have not already attended one.

January /  
February

Prepare for interviews and attend any that sixth forms or colleges offer you. The application process may differ from one establishment to another. Be sure to regularly check the email addresses you provided when applying and respond as early as possible to any emails requiring action.

February /  
March

## April – July (summer term)

Continue to attend any sixth form or college interviews. If you cannot attend an interview always notify the sixth form or college and reschedule.

April / May

Open a [bank account](#) if you don't already have one. This is recommended as it will be a useful form of ID and helps if you need to apply for any financial support.

April

Get your CV ready which will help you apply for work experience, part-time jobs, and apprenticeships.

Start to look out for any interesting apprenticeships within travelling distance of home and check out the entrance requirements. Here are some links to help you:

May / June

- [Apprenticeships](#)
- [Apprenticeships - Ealing Council](#)

Start looking for part-time work, voluntary work or work experience after completing your exams. This will help develop your personal skills, life experience and CV. Here are some links to help you:

May / June  
/ July

- [Part time jobs - Ealing](#)
- [Find a volunteering opportunity | NCVO](#)
- [How to get work experience | National Careers Service](#)

Get involved in summer activities.

June / July

- [What's on in Ealing](#)

## August – September (after your exams)

Collect your GCSE results from school.

Book and attend enrolment at your chosen sixth form or college. This is where they check your ID and documents and qualifications. If you want to change one of your chosen subjects speak to your sixth form or college.

If your GCSE results are not what you expected, don't worry, there are still lots of options available. However, you will need to take an active role in deciding your next steps. This may involve contacting sixth forms, colleges or training providers directly to discuss your results and what courses/ qualifications may now be an option for you.

Independent advice is also available through [CONNEXIONS - Young Ealing](#)

Continue to apply for apprenticeships if this is your preferred option. It is recommended you have a backup plan to register with a sixth form or college as the apprenticeship recruitment process could take up to 6 months.

Check with your chosen sixth form or college whether you will be eligible for a 16 to 19 bursary fund to support with essential costs like travel, equipment, meals. For more information on 16 to 19 bursaries visit the government website:

- [16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Help - GOV.UK](#)

If you intend to be home educated you will need to notify the council via [Home education | Home education | Ealing Council](#)

If you are experiencing any barriers to education, employment or training please contact [CONNEXIONS - Young Ealing](#) for support.

August

September

## Questions to ask at open events

Open evenings/days are a great chance to explore your options, meet teachers/tutors, and discover what each sixth form or college can offer. Asking the right questions will help you compare courses, understand expectations, and get a real sense of whether a provider is the right fit for your goals, interests, and future plans. Here are some questions you might find helpful:

- what are the entry requirements for the courses I'm interested in?
- how is the course assessed (exams, coursework, practical work)?
- are there opportunities to mix academic and vocational courses?
- how many A levels is the qualification equivalent to?
- if I start a course and decide it is not for me, can I change onto a new one? When is the deadline to change course?
- how many hours am I expected to be at school or college?
- what do I do and where can I go when there isn't a lesson?
- how can you meet my learning (or other type of) needs? What if I struggle with specific subjects?
- do you offer support with identifying university courses, sourcing apprenticeships or work placements and applications?
- do you offer work experience, industry links, or vocational placements?
- what destinations do students typically move on to - university, apprenticeships, employment?



## Where can you study or train?

You can choose from several different types of places to study or work after year 11. Research the ones you are interested in. Open days or taster days will be available, especially during the autumn term, to check and see whether sixth form or college is right for you.

### School sixth forms

School sixth forms are for 16 to 19 year olds and are attached to secondary schools. They tend to be formal, meaning you are expected to wear smart clothing. The site is also often shared with younger students. School sixth forms tend to focus on level 3 qualifications, next step up from GCSEs, and primarily offer a wide range of A levels, but some may also offer vocational courses such as BTECs and T levels. Some school sixth forms offer GCSE resit options if you just missed the grades you needed. They also tend to be smaller than most sixth form colleges or further education colleges. School sixth forms can be a viable stepping stone to university, apprenticeships (including degree) and employment.

### Sixth form colleges

Sixth form colleges are for 16 to 19 year olds and are typically more informal than school sixth forms. You can dress more casually and generally you'll only have to be on-site when you have lectures. They offer a more mature leaning environment, but still expect good punctuality, attendance and behaviour similar to school sixth forms. Sixth form colleges can offer A levels, but generally will offer a much wider range of vocational courses such as BTECs and T levels. Sixth form colleges also have students studying from entry level to level 3 courses (for explanation of levels please see pages 15-16). Sixth form colleges are a viable stepping stone to university, apprenticeships (including degree) and employment.

### Further education colleges

Further education colleges are for both adults and young people and can be much larger than school sites with some having multiple buildings. Further education colleges offer a broad range of full-time, part-time, day and evening courses for young people and adults. Courses are offered from entry level to level 4 including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), GCSEs, A levels, apprenticeships and technical and vocational qualifications for example BTECs and T levels. Sixth form colleges can be a viable stepping stone to university, apprenticeships (including degree) and employment.

### Independent training providers

Independent training providers offer things like short courses, supported internships, and the training part of apprenticeships. Some of these programmes are designed to help you build your skills and get work ready. You may study at a training centre, in the workplace, or a combination of both.

## Qualification levels explained

To support you in making the right choices about your qualifications, it helps to first understand the different levels and their difficulty. You don't want to pick a level that is too easy for you nor one that is too difficult. You want to choose the level that will challenge you, but you are also capable of, with some hard work, achieving. On leaving year 11 entry level to level 3 will be your qualification level options depending on your year 11 exam results. The qualification levels are:

Entry level	<p>Suitable for you if you are not ready for GCSE level. They are available at 3 sub-levels, entry levels 1 to 3, with 3 being the most difficult. Most colleges offer entry level qualifications for young people aged 16 to 18.</p> <p>Entry level courses give you access to level 1 qualifications, supported internships, foundation apprenticeships and employment.</p>
Level 1	<p>Equivalent to lower GCSE grades 1 to 3.</p> <p>These qualifications help you build confidence and understanding before you can tackle higher level learning. Most colleges offer level 1 qualifications for young people aged 16 to 18.</p> <p>The majority of level 1 graduates step up to a level 2 qualification, enter the workplace, or move onto an apprenticeship pathway.</p>
Level 2	<p>Equivalent to GCSE grades 4 to 9. These qualifications can help you achieve a deeper understanding of a subject or area of work.</p> <p>If you have mainly grade 3s at GCSE or have successfully completed your level 1 course then this level is for you.</p> <p>Level 2 qualifications are designed to prepare you to step up to level 3 programmes or move into employment or onto an apprenticeship pathway.</p>
Level 3	<p>Equivalent to A levels, but can also include vocational qualifications and advanced apprenticeships.</p> <p>At this level, you're demonstrating you can work independently, think critically, and apply what you've learned.</p> <p>It will give you access to higher education courses from a university provider, a higher, level 4 or 5, apprenticeship, a degree apprenticeship (level 6 or 7), or straight into skilled employment.</p> <p>To be working at this level you will usually need a minimum of 4 GCSEs at grades 4 to 9 or merit grades on your level 2 course.</p>

Level 4 - 6	<p>Not available at age 16 as they are university level qualifications (higher education) equivalent to the first, second, and third years of a degree, respectively.</p> <p>These courses are generally suitable for students with a level 3 qualification.</p>
Level 7	<p>Level 7 qualifications are at master's level. They require advanced knowledge and skills, and often involve doing your own research or solving complex problems in creative ways.</p> <p>You normally need a degree first because it gives you the essential background knowledge and skills you'll rely on during master's level study.</p>
Level 8	<p>Level 8 is the highest level of study, a doctorate. This is the level where you become an expert in a very specific subject. When you finish a doctorate, you can use "Dr" instead of Mr, Ms or Mrs on forms and documents.</p>



## The most popular qualifications explained

The post-16 world of qualifications can be confusing and is presently being reviewed by the government. As part of this in March 2026 the government announced the introduction of V levels which will start to be introduced in sixth forms and colleges from September 2027, so they could be another viable option for you when you start reviewing your post-16 options at the start of year 11.

### A levels (Advanced levels)

A levels are academic, subject based, level 3 qualifications (there are over 40) usually studied by students in a sixth form or college. They take 2 years to complete and are assessed by exams at the end of the second year, however, some subjects will include coursework or practical components. They are the most traditional route to university.

You normally study 3 A level subjects, although some sixth forms may start you with 4 with the option of reducing to 3 at the end of year 12 or continuing with 4. You may take a mix of new subjects and ones you think you'll do well in at GCSE.

You might choose A levels if you:

- enjoy learning in a classroom, can manage your revision well and don't get too anxious in exams
- are aiming to go to university, particularly for more academic courses
- already have a strong interest in a small number of subjects and want to study them in depth
- achieved 'good' GCSE results, especially in the subjects you want to continue
- want to keep your options open, as A levels are widely recognised

Entrance requirements will vary from each sixth form and college but they are usually a minimum of 5 GCSEs grades 4 to 9, including maths and English. A minimum of a grade 6 is usually recommended for the subjects you would like to study.

### BTECs (Business and Technology Education Council qualifications)

BTECs are the most common type of practical and work related (vocational) qualification. At the age of 16 you can study a BTEC at entry-level or level 1, 2 or 3 depending on your GCSE results. Level 3 BTECs, called BTEC Nationals, can be a viable alternative to A levels:

- BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma - equivalent to 3 A levels
- BTEC Level 3 Diploma - equivalent to 2 A levels, often taken with another subject, for example an A level to make a full study programme

- BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate - equivalent to 1 A level and can be combined with other subjects to make a full study programme

BTECs are assessed through a combination of coursework, practical projects and some tests spread across the course rather than relying on final exams at the end, which can be stressful. You can also study a level 1 BTEC (equivalent to GCSE grades 1 to 3) or level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades 4 to 9) dependant on your GCSE results.

You might choose BTECs if you:

- enjoy practical, hands on learning
- prefer continuous assessment rather than lots of exams
- want to learn skills linked to real jobs and industries
- want a qualification that combines theory and practical work
- plan to progress to university, an apprenticeship or employment

Entrance requirements will vary from each school and college, but can be a little lower than those needed to study A levels. To access a level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma, which is the equivalent of 3 A levels, you may require 4 GCSEs grade 4 or above, including English and maths or a relevant level 2 qualification and Functional Skills in English and maths at level 2.

Over 95% of universities accept level 3 BTEC Nationals, especially when relevant to the subject area. BTEC Nationals combined with A levels can strengthen applications to the more competitive universities.

### **CTECs (Cambridge Technicals)**

Very similar to BTECs, they are practical and career focussed. The reason for some subjects being called BTECs and others CTECs is simply the different exam boards; BTECs are run by Pearson, Cambridge Technicals by Cambridge OCR.

### **V (Vocational) levels**

As highlighted earlier in this section, [V levels](#) are brand-new post-16 vocational qualifications that will be available from September 2027. They will help you learn real world skills linked to different job sectors. The first V levels will be in digital, education and early years, and finance and accounting. More subjects will be added over time.

Each V level is the equivalent of 1 A level, so you can mix and match them with A levels if you want.

The intention is that over time they will sit alongside A levels and T levels, eventually

replacing the wide range of other vocational qualifications that are not A or T levels, for example, BTECs, which give you a hands on, practical learning route. It's important to note that BTECs and CTECs, which were highlighted earlier in this section, will still be an option for you at this time.

You might choose V levels if you:

- prefer practical, hands on learning
- prefer continuous assessment rather than lots of exams
- want to explore different job areas
- want to combine them with A levels
- don't want to commit to one specific technical career yet, for example, like a T level would
- plan to progress to university, an apprenticeship or employment

Entrance requirements are still to be confirmed but providers may ask for around 5 GCSEs at grade 4 to 9. Some, more technical, V level subjects may require a grade 5 or above in related subjects.

## **T (Technical) levels**

T levels are another practical alternative to A levels and are 2 year technical qualifications for students aged 16 to 18. A T level is the equivalent of 3 A levels (similar to a level 3 BTEC National Extended Diploma) so again you would only have to choose 1 T level, instead of studying several subjects.

T levels combine a mix of classroom learning with 45 days of practical work experience and are available in a wide range of work-related industries, including design and construction, digital production, education and early years, healthcare, finance and accounting, engineering, legal services, hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy, media broadcast and production and animal care and management.

You might choose T levels if you:

- already have an interest in a specific career or industry
- enjoy practical, hands-on learning rather than only exams
- want real work experience while studying
- plan to move into skilled employment, an apprenticeship or higher education
- prefer learning skills that are directly linked to jobs

Entrance requirements will be set by each sixth form and college but will usually be a

minimum of 5 GCSE grades 4 to 9. T levels are primarily offered in colleges, but some school sixth forms do offer them too (see subject matrix page 32). T levels are assessed using a combination of written tests, projects, and practical assignments.

T levels are now widely accepted by universities. For a list on universities that accept T levels visit [universities that accept T levels](#).

## Cambridge Nationals

[Cambridge Nationals](#) are vocational qualifications designed mainly for students aged 14 to 16, though they can also serve as a good foundation for some post-16 learners in building skills, confidence and understanding to prepare for progression to further study. They are assessed through a combination of written tests and practical assignments.

You might choose Cambridge Nationals if you:

- enjoy practical, hands on learning
- want a qualification that links school subjects to real jobs
- prefer coursework alongside exams, rather than exams only
- want to develop confidence, teamwork and problem solving skills

Cambridge Nationals can lead to BTECs and other vocational level 3 courses, A levels (depending on your results and the subjects studied), T levels, apprenticeships and further education and training

## NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications)

[NVQs](#) are work based qualifications, available at levels 2 to 7 that focus on developing the skills and knowledge needed to do a specific job. They are usually assessed and completed in the workplace where you build up a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate you can perform the job to the required standard.

Some employers offer NVQ qualifications for young people aged 16 to 18, allowing you to move onto an apprenticeship, study at university or progress into employment. NVQs are available in a wide range of work-based subjects, ranging from plumbing to hairdressing.

## Are NVQs the same as apprenticeships?

No, but they are closely related. You can complete an NVQ as part of an apprenticeship, but you don't have to be an apprentice to study for an NVQ.

# Apprenticeships

Now is a great time to begin an apprenticeship. Across England, the number of people starting an apprenticeship rose by 4.1% in the 2024/25 academic year compared with the year before. Young people under 19 made up 21.2% of new apprenticeships, which is 74,990 people. In December 2025, the government announced a major £725 million investment to create more apprenticeships for young people and to help make sure people are trained for the jobs available in their local area.

## What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are real jobs where you earn a salary and work towards a recognised qualification. You don't need a student loan to do one. Apprenticeships give you the chance to work, earn and learn at the same time. As an apprentice, you'll be employed by an organisation and will:

- work alongside experienced staff
- learn skills needed for the job
- earn a wage and receive holiday pay
- get time set aside for learning, usually the equivalent of one day a week, to study for your qualification

## What types of apprenticeships are there?

There are more than 1,500 different apprenticeship roles across a huge range of jobs. So whatever career you're interested in, there's likely to be an apprenticeship that fits — from advertising and youth work to sport, engineering, law, nursing, digital roles and many more. A wide range of employers offer apprenticeships including, for example, Amazon, Google, Greggs, Superdrug, the BBC and Ealing Council ([Careers – London Borough of Ealing or Opportunities - Ealing portal](#)).

## When can I start an apprenticeship?

You can apply for an apprenticeship while you're still in year 11. However, it's sensible to also apply for sixth form or college courses as a backup option, in case the apprenticeship you want isn't available straight away.

You can start an apprenticeship from the day after your official leaving date in year 11 (the last Friday in June) as long as:

- you are 16, or will turn 16 before 1 September that year
- you are not in full-time education
- you live in England

## Apprenticeship levels

Apprenticeships in the UK are structured into 4 main levels – Foundation and Intermediate, Advanced, Higher and Degree.

	Level	Equivalent Education Level
Foundation & Intermediate	2	GCSE
Advanced	3	A level
Higher	4,5,6,7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or Master's degree

If you are looking to start an apprenticeship after year 11 (you can access an apprenticeship at any stage during your working life), you will be looking at either level 2, or level 3 apprenticeships. Which level is most appropriate can be dependent on your exam results at the end of year 11.

**Level 2 entrance requirements** – generally flexible, focussing more on attitude and potential than formal qualifications. Employers need to know that you have the skills and commitment to complete the apprenticeship. Your training provider will help you secure your level 2 English and maths if you haven't achieved a minimum of a grade 4 at GCSE. A level 2 apprenticeship typically lasts 8 to 18 months.

**Level 3 entrance requirements** - typically, you will need 5 GCSEs at grades 4 to 9, typically including English and maths or a level 2 qualification, for example you may have completed a level 2 apprenticeship. Any related work experience can also be beneficial. A level 3 apprenticeship typically lasts 18 to 24 months.

### How much will I earn?

The minimum wage for apprentices aged 16 to 18 is updated yearly. The national minimum wage for apprentices is presently **£8.00** an hour (as of 1 April 2026) but many employers pay more than this.

### Where to look for an apprenticeship?

If you are in year 11 and interested in an apprenticeship, there are several ways you can find out more. More information, including videos of current apprentices, is available at [apprenticeships.gov.uk](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk). You can search and apply for local vacancies at [browse apprenticeships](#) or [find an apprenticeship](#) on GOV.UK. Once registered, email and text alerts can be set up about new apprenticeship vacancies.

For Ealing Council apprenticeships, email [careers@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:careers@ealing.gov.uk). Vacancies will be listed on the Ealing Council jobs page at [recruitment.ealing.gov.uk](http://recruitment.ealing.gov.uk).

For other apprenticeship vacancies in the borough, email [apprenticeships@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ealing.gov.uk). Vacancies are listed at [Work Ealing](http://Work Ealing).

Depending on the level you took, when you've finished your apprenticeship, you could:

- get another job with the same company you did your apprenticeship at
- find a job with a different employer
- do another apprenticeship at a higher level or in a different industry to try something different
- go to university or another type of higher education



## Which pathway is right for you?

When it comes to continuing your education or entering the world of work after year 11 there are a number of pathways available to you. The pathway you choose for year 12 and beyond will not only depend on the qualifications and grades you achieve in year 11 but also your interests, what you enjoy, and how you learn best. Use the quick guide below to work out which pathway may be best for you.

My predicted grades	My post-16 options	What would I do next?
If you're likely to get at least 5 GCSE passes at grades 4 and above including English and maths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A levels although you'll probably need at least grade 6s in the subjects you want to specialise in</li> <li>• level 3 BTECs</li> <li>• T levels</li> <li>• V levels</li> <li>• level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship</li> </ul>	Progress to university, a higher apprenticeship, including a degree level apprenticeship, or employment.
If you're likely to get mostly GCSE grades 1 to 4, or BTECs at level 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve your GCSE grades especially in English or maths or study for some more GCSEs</li> <li>• T level transition course</li> <li>• BTEC level 2 or 3 certificate or other vocational level 2 course</li> <li>• level 2 Cambridge Technicals or Nationals</li> <li>• level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship</li> </ul>	Progress to a level 3 course, such as a level 3 BTEC diploma or BTEC national, an advanced apprenticeship or employment or a traineeship.
If your top GCSE grades are likely to be 3s, or BTECs at level 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level 2 apprenticeship</li> <li>• retake English and maths</li> <li>• BTEC level 2 or other vocational level 2 course</li> <li>• Cambridge National level 1 or 2</li> <li>• supported internships, if you have an Educational Health Care Plan</li> </ul>	Progress to a level 2 or 3 course, a traineeship, a supported internship (if you have an EHCP), an intermediate apprenticeship or employment.

My predicted grades	My post-16 options	What would I do next?
<p>If you've found it hard at school and aren't likely to get any GCSEs or BTECs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCSE English and or maths</li> <li>• functional skills literacy or numeracy</li> <li>• technical and vocational level 1</li> <li>• foundation programmes to build your confidence and add to your knowledge and skills</li> <li>• supported internships if you have an EHCP</li> </ul>	<p>Progress to a level 2 course, pre-apprenticeship course, a 16 to 19 study programme, a supported internship, if you have an EHCP, or employment.</p>



## SEND

In the borough, the aim is for young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to have the same opportunities as their peers to access post-16 education, employment and training. When you leave year 11, the priority is to make sure you have:

- choice, control and independence in your life
- opportunities to develop friendships and social skills
- support to be healthy and active
- chances to be involved in your local community

Making decisions about your future can sometimes feel overwhelming. If you have any worries or questions, you are encouraged to talk to your:

- parents/carers, Connexions adviser and career adviser
- special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)
- education health and care coordinator (EHCCO)
- school careers adviser
- social worker, if you have one

### Opportunities

There are many education and training routes available in the borough and wider London that can help you build life skills, gain qualifications and move towards supported internships and employment, apprenticeships or university. You can choose to attend a mainstream sixth form or college listed within this booklet, but there are also specialist options designed to support you. This guide explains those options so you can decide what might be right for you.

### Your post-16 options after year 11

Depending on your interests, abilities and qualifications, your options may include:

#### Personalised study programmes

Study programmes give you the chance to:

- work towards a qualification
- improve your English and maths
- gain work experience
- develop independence and life skills

If you are not yet ready to work towards a formal qualification, you can still take part in a study programme that focuses on personal development, employability and practical life skills. You may wish to explore:

- mainstream further education colleges with SEND support
- special school with post-16 provision
- specialist SEND colleges
- independent training providers
- voluntary and community sector providers offering life-skills-based programmes

Your SENCO, careers adviser and EHCP caseworker can help you identify suitable providers within the borough and neighbouring boroughs.

## **Vocational qualifications**

### **Pre-supported internship and pre-apprenticeship programmes**

These programmes are for young people aged 16+ who want to work but are not yet ready for a full apprenticeship or supported internship. They offer:

- supported work experience
- opportunities to improve confidence and independence
- development of employability skills
- continued support with English and maths

These programmes are a positive stepping stone towards employment or further training.

### **Supported internships**

[Supported internships](#) are usually 1 year programmes for young people aged 16 to 24 who have an EHCP. They are designed to help you get a paid job by:

- spending most of your time learning in the workplace
- receiving support from a job coach
- having support from a tutor to develop English and maths
- building skills, confidence and independence

You do not need qualifications to start a supported internship. Most programmes allow you to try different work areas so you can discover what suits you best. You will usually attend 5 days a week, and full support is provided throughout the programme. Find out more about supported internship programmes available in west London by following [Supported Internships 2026](#).

## **Inclusive apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships combine paid work with training and qualifications. Inclusive apprenticeships are traditional apprenticeships but with adjustments for both the business and you, the learner. These programmes are tailored to support you if you face employment barriers, including physical disability, neurodivergence, learning disability, and autism. Key points:

- they are available at level 2, 3 and higher
- young people with an EHCP may be considered if they can work towards entry level 3 or above in English and maths
- if you are 19 or above you can either opt in or opt out of upskilling in maths and English, at the start of the apprenticeship subject to the agreement of your employer. Those who opt in are required to complete an assessment (exam) after completing functional skills, but do not need to pass the exam to progress through to the end of the apprenticeship
- the most important requirement is motivation and a desire to work
- apprenticeships usually last 12 to 18 months for young people with SEND

Many apprentices stay with their employer once they finish, while others move into different roles or further training.

## **University**

If you are considering university in the longer term, please note:

- your EHCP ends when you start higher education
- universities provide support through Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and student support services

If you have a social worker, they will talk to you about preparing for this transition. If not, speak to your SEND caseworker or careers adviser about the support available.

## **What should I do next?**

### **Step 1: Explore your interests**

Think about what you enjoy, what you are good at, and what you might like to do in the future.

### **Step 2: Visit providers**

Once you find a course or programme that interests you:

- contact the provider to arrange a visit
- ask to meet the course tutor and student support services
- explain your support needs and share your EHCP, if you have one

### **Step 3: Get advice**

- listen carefully to the advice given
- remember that not every course will be the right fit for you and that is okay
- making the right choice now will help you in the long term

### **Understanding SEND support and EHCPs**

- the support you receive at school is likely to continue in college or training, helping you work towards greater independence
- an EHCP explains the support you need from ages 0 to 25 while in education
- your year 11 annual review is an important opportunity to plan your post-16 support and plan moving forward

Leaving school is an exciting step. It is also okay to feel unsure or to change your mind along the way. Learning happens at different speeds and every step you take helps you move closer to your goals.

Enjoy your learning, ask for help when you need it, and remember - your future matters.



## SEN post-16 specialist options – contact details

### Special schools in the borough

#### Belvue School

Rowdell Road, Northolt, UB5 6AG

T: 020 8845 5766

E: [admin@belvue.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:admin@belvue.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Belvue School - Home](#)

#### John Chilton School (Bengarth Site)

Bengarth Road, Northolt, UB5 5LD

T: 020 8289 4790

E: [admin@john-chilton.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:admin@john-chilton.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [John Chilton School - Home](#)

#### Springhallow School

Compton Close, Cavendish Avenue, Ealing W13 0JG

T: 020 8998 2700

E: [admin@springhallow.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:admin@springhallow.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Springhallow School - Home](#)

#### St Ann's School

Springfield Road, Hanwell, W7 3JP

T: 020 8567 6291

E: [adminmail@st-anns.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:adminmail@st-anns.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [St Ann's School - Home](#)

### Colleges with SEN provision

#### Harrow College

(Harrow on the Hill Campus)

Lowlands Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3AQ

T: 020 8909 6000

E: [enquiriesharrow@hruc.ac.uk](mailto:enquiriesharrow@hruc.ac.uk)

W: [Harrow College - Foundation Learning & Skills for Life](#)

#### Richmond upon Thames College

Langhorn Drive, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 7SJ

T: 020 8607 8000

E: [info@hruc.ac.uk](mailto:info@hruc.ac.uk)

W: [Richmond U-T College - Foundation Learning & Skills for Life](#)

## Colleges with SEN provision

### Uxbridge College

Park Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1NQ

T: 01895 853333

E: [enquiries@uxbridgecollege.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@uxbridgecollege.ac.uk)

W: [Uxbridge College - Foundation learning & Skills for Life](#)

### West London College (3 sites)

- Ealing Green College, W5 5EW
- Southall Community College, UB1 1DP
- Hammersmith & Fulham, W14 9BL

T: 020 7565 1200

E: [admissions@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@wlc.ac.uk)

W: [WLC - Foundation Learning](#)

W: [WLC - Inclusive Learning](#)

### West Thames College – Independence Hub

Isleworth Campus, TW7 4HS

T: 020 8326 2000

E: [parmeen.sarda@west-thames.ac.uk](mailto:parmeen.sarda@west-thames.ac.uk)

W: [West Thames - Independence Hub](#)



# Subjects offered by the borough's school sixth forms and colleges

This table is not fully accessible. If you need this information in a different format, email [ELP@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:ELP@ealing.gov.uk)

Special school post-16 options are not shown in this table because they are planned around each student's individual needs. For more information, please contact the relevant special school directly (see page 30 for contact details).

## Index:

= vocational 
  = A level 
  = T level 
  = option of both A level and vocational

Courses	Ada Lovelace CofE High School	Alec Reed Academy	Ark Acton Academy	Ark Soane Academy	Brentside High School	Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School	Dormers Wells High School	Drayton Manor High School	Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls	Elthorne Park High School	Featherstone High School	Greenford High School	Islip Manor High School	Twyford CofE High School	Villiers High School	William Perkin CofE High School	West London College	Capel Manor - Gunnersbury Park
Accounting	X																X	
Accounting and Bookkeeping																	X	
Animal Care/ Management																		X
Applied Science		X	X		X			X			X	X	X		X		X	
Art (fine)				X	X					X				X	X			
Art (graphics)					X					X					X			
Art (photography)					X					X					X			
Art, Craft & Design								X			X							
Art & Design		X			X	X	X	X							X		X	
Barista Skills																	X	
Beauty Therapy																	X	
Biology		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bookkeeping																	X	
Brickwork																	X	
Business		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	
Business Admin					X													
Business Studies			X				X						X		X	X		
Business Retail (Pathways)																	X	
Carpentry																	X	

Courses	<a href="#">Ada Lovelace CofE High School</a>	<a href="#">Alec Reed Academy</a>	<a href="#">Ark Acton Academy</a>	<a href="#">Ark Soane Academy</a>	<a href="#">Brentside High School</a>	<a href="#">Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School</a>	<a href="#">Dormers Wells High School</a>	<a href="#">Drayton Manor High School</a>	<a href="#">Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls</a>	<a href="#">Elthorne Park High School</a>	<a href="#">Featherstone High School</a>	<a href="#">Greenford High School</a>	<a href="#">Islip Manor High School</a>	<a href="#">Twyford CofE High School</a>	<a href="#">Villiers High School</a>	<a href="#">William Perkin CofE High School</a>	<a href="#">West London College</a>	<a href="#">Capel Manor - Gunnersbury Park</a>
Catering (Professional Cookery)																		X
Chemistry		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Computer Science		X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X		
Computing																X		
Construction Multi-Trades																		X
Construction Skills Introduction																		X
Culinary Arts (Step Up)																		X
Design & Technology		X																
Design & Technology - Product Design					X						X				X			
Digital (Creative) Media									X						X			
Digital Production, Design & Development																		X
Digital Software Development	X																	
Drama						X												
Drama - Performing Arts		X			X													
Drama & Theatre Studies								X	X									
Early Years Practitioner																		X
Economics		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Electrical Installation																		X
English Language						X										X		
English Language & Literature							X											
English Literature		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Extended Project Qualification		X			X	X		X	X	X		X		X		X		
Film Studies						X				X				X				
Floristry																		X
French				X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Further Mathematics		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		
GCSE Retake programme		X	X		X						X				X			X
Geography		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		

Courses	Ada Lovelace CofE High School	Alec Reed Academy	Ark Acton Academy	Ark Soane Academy	Brentside High School	Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School	Dormers Wells High School	Drayton Manor High School	Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls	Etthorne Park High School	Featherstone High School	Greenford High School	Islip Manor High School	Twyford CofE High School	Villiers High School	William Perkin CofE High School	West London College	Capel Manor - Gunnersbury Park
German							X		X				X			X		
Government & Politics				X	X			X	X			X			X			
Graphic Communications (art)													X	X				
Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy																		X
Hairdressing																		X
Hair & Beauty (Step Up)																		X
Health (T Level)																		X
Health & Social Care		X			X		X		X	X	X	X			X			X
History		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
ICT		X	X															
ICT - Digital Skills																		X
ICT (Game Development)																		X
IT		X					X	X		X	X							X
IT (Digital Technology)																		X
IT (Pathways)																		X
Laboratory Science	X																	
Land Based Studies																		X
Pathways to Land Based Studies																		X
Landscaping & Gardening																		X
Latin							X											
Law					X										X			
Mathematics		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Media (creative) Production					X									X				X
Media (creative) Production & Technology																		X
Media Studies				X	X		X	X	X		X			X				
Medical Science		X				X												
Mental Health & Physical Wellbeing																		X
Motor Vehicle Maintenance																		X

Courses	Ada Lovelace CofE High School	Alec Reed Academy	Ark Acton Academy	Ark Soane Academy	Brentside High School	Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School	Dormers Wells High School	Drayton Manor High School	Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls	Elthorne Park High School	Featherstone High School	Greenford High School	Islip Manor High School	Twyford CofE High School	Villiers High School	William Perkin CofE High School	West London College	Capel Manor - Gunnersbury Park
Music					X		X	X					X					
Music & Performing Arts	X																	
Music Technology	X				X								X					
Philosophy															X			
Philosophy & Ethics	X							X										
Philosophy, Ethics & Religion											X							
Photography					X	X	X	X					X	X				
PE	X				X		X		X							X		
Physics	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Plastering																	X	
Plumbing																	X	
Politics					X	X			X	X			X	X	X			
Product Design					X	X		X						X				
Psychology	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Public Services																	X	
Public Services (Uniformed and Protective)																	X	
Religious Studies (philosophy & ethics)					X		X	X	X							X		
Religious Studies				X	X	X			X				X					
Science					X								X				X	
Service Industries (Pathways)																	X	
Sociology	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Spanish					X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X			
Sport	X				X					X	X	X					X	
Sports Coaching & Development																	X	
Sports & Public Services (Pathways)																	X	
Sport Science			X														X	
Travel & Tourism	X																	
Travel, Tourism & Aviation																	X	

## Contact details for the borough's school sixth forms and colleges

### **Ada Lovelace Church of England High School**

Park View Road, Ealing, London, W5 2JX  
T: 0203 540 0200  
E: [office@adalovelace.org.uk](mailto:office@adalovelace.org.uk)  
W: [Ada Lovelace CofE HS - Home](#)

### **Alec Reed Academy**

Bengarth Road, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 5LQ  
T: 0208 841 4511  
E: [enquiries@alecreedacademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@alecreedacademy.co.uk)  
W: [Alec Reed Academy - Home](#)

### **Ark Acton Academy**

Gunnersbury Lane, London, W3 8EY  
T: 0203 110 2400  
E: [info@arkacton.org](mailto:info@arkacton.org)  
W: [Ark Acton Academy - Home](#)

### **Ark Soane Academy**

Gunnersbury Lane, London, W3 8EA  
T: 0207 430 8876  
E: [info@arksoane.org](mailto:info@arksoane.org)  
W: [Ark Soane Academy - Home](#)

### **Brentside High School**

Greenford Avenue, Hanwell, London, W7 1JJ  
T: 0208 575 9162  
E: [info@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:info@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk)  
W: [Brentside High School - Home](#)

### **Capel Manor College – Gunnersbury Park**

Popes Lane, Acton, W3 8LQ  
T: 020 8993 6266  
W: [Gunnersbury Park Campus - Home](#)

### **Dormers Wells High School**

Dormers Wells Lane, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3HZ  
T: 0208 566 6446  
E: [info@dwhs.co.uk](mailto:info@dwhs.co.uk)  
W: [Dormers Wells High School - Home](#)

### **Drayton Manor High School**

Drayton Bridge Road, London, W7 1EU

T: 020 8357 1900

E: [adminoffice@draytonmanorhighschool.co.uk](mailto:adminoffice@draytonmanorhighschool.co.uk)

W: [Drayton Manor High School - Home](#)

### **Elthorne Park High School**

Westlea Road, Hanwell, London, W7 2AH

T: 020 8566 1166

E: [elthorne@ephs.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:elthorne@ephs.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Elthorne Park High School - Home](#)

### **Featherstone High School**

11 Montague Waye, Southall, Middlesex, UB2 5HF

T: 0208 843 0984

E: [info@featherstonehigh.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:info@featherstonehigh.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Featherstone High School - Home](#)

### **Greenford High School**

Lady Margaret Road, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 2GU

T: 0208 578 9152

E: [office@greenford.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:office@greenford.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Greenford High School - Home](#)

### **Islip Manor High School**

Eastcote Lane, Northolt, UB5 4HP

T: 0208 864 8544

E: [admin@islipmanorhigh.org.uk](mailto:admin@islipmanorhigh.org.uk)

W: [Islip Manor High School - Home](#)

### **The Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School**

Greenford Road, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 9AW

T: 0208 575 8222

E: [info@wiseman.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:info@wiseman.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [The Cardinal Wiseman CS - Home](#)

### **The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls**

Queen's Drive, Acton, London, W3 0HW

T: 0208 752 1525

E: [office@ellenwilkinson.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:office@ellenwilkinson.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [The Ellen Wilkinson School - Home](#)

### **Twyford Church of England High School**

Twyford Crescent, Acton, London, W3 9PP

T: 0208 752 0141

E: [office@twyford.org.uk](mailto:office@twyford.org.uk)

W: [Twyford CofE High School - Home](#)

### **Villiers High School**

Boyd Avenue, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3BT

T: 0208 813 8001

E: [info@villiers.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:info@villiers.ealing.sch.uk)

W: [Villiers High School - Home](#)

### **West London College (3 sites)**

- Ealing Green College, W5 5EW
- Southall Community College, UB1 1DP
- Hammersmith & Fulham, W14 9BL

T: 020 7565 1200

E: [admissions@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@wlc.ac.uk)

W: [West London College - Home](#)

### **William Perkin Church of England High School**

Oldfield Lane North, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 8PR

T: 020 8832 8950

E: [office@williamperkin.org.uk](mailto:office@williamperkin.org.uk)

W: [William Perkin CofE High School - Home](#)



## Other school sixth forms and colleges near to the borough

Whilst the borough's sixth forms and colleges offer an extensive range of study options and facilities, you may for a variety of reasons be interested in attending a provider in a neighbouring borough. You can find out more about what is on offer outside of Ealing by visiting some of the popular destination provider websites below or contacting them directly.

### **City of Westminster College (2 sites)**

- Paddington Green Campus, W2 1NB
- Maida Vale Campus, W9 2NR

T: 020 7723 8826

E: [customer.services@cw.ac.uk](mailto:customer.services@cw.ac.uk)

W: [City of Westminster College - Home](#)

### **Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges**

(HRUC) (3 sites)

- Harrow College, HA1 3AQ / HA3 6RR
- Richmond upon Thames, TW2 7SJ
- Uxbridge College, UB8 1NQ / UB3 3BB

T: 01895 853333

E: [enquiries@uxbridgecollege.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@uxbridgecollege.ac.uk)

W: [HRUC - Home](#)

### **St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College**

74 St Charles Square, London, W10 6EY

T: 020 8968 7755

E: [enquiries@stcharles.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@stcharles.ac.uk)

W: [St Charles Catholic SF College - Home](#)

### **St Dominic's Sixth Form College**

Mount Park Avenue, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex, HA1 3HX

T: 020 8422 8084

E: [stdoms@stdoms.ac.uk](mailto:stdoms@stdoms.ac.uk)

W: [St Dominic's SF College - Home](#)

### **West Thames College (2 sites)**

- Isleworth Campus, TW7 4HS
- Skills + Logistics Centre, TW13 5DR

T: 020 8326 2000

W: [West Thames College - Home](#)

### **William Morris Sixth Form**

St Dunstan's Road, London, W6 8RB

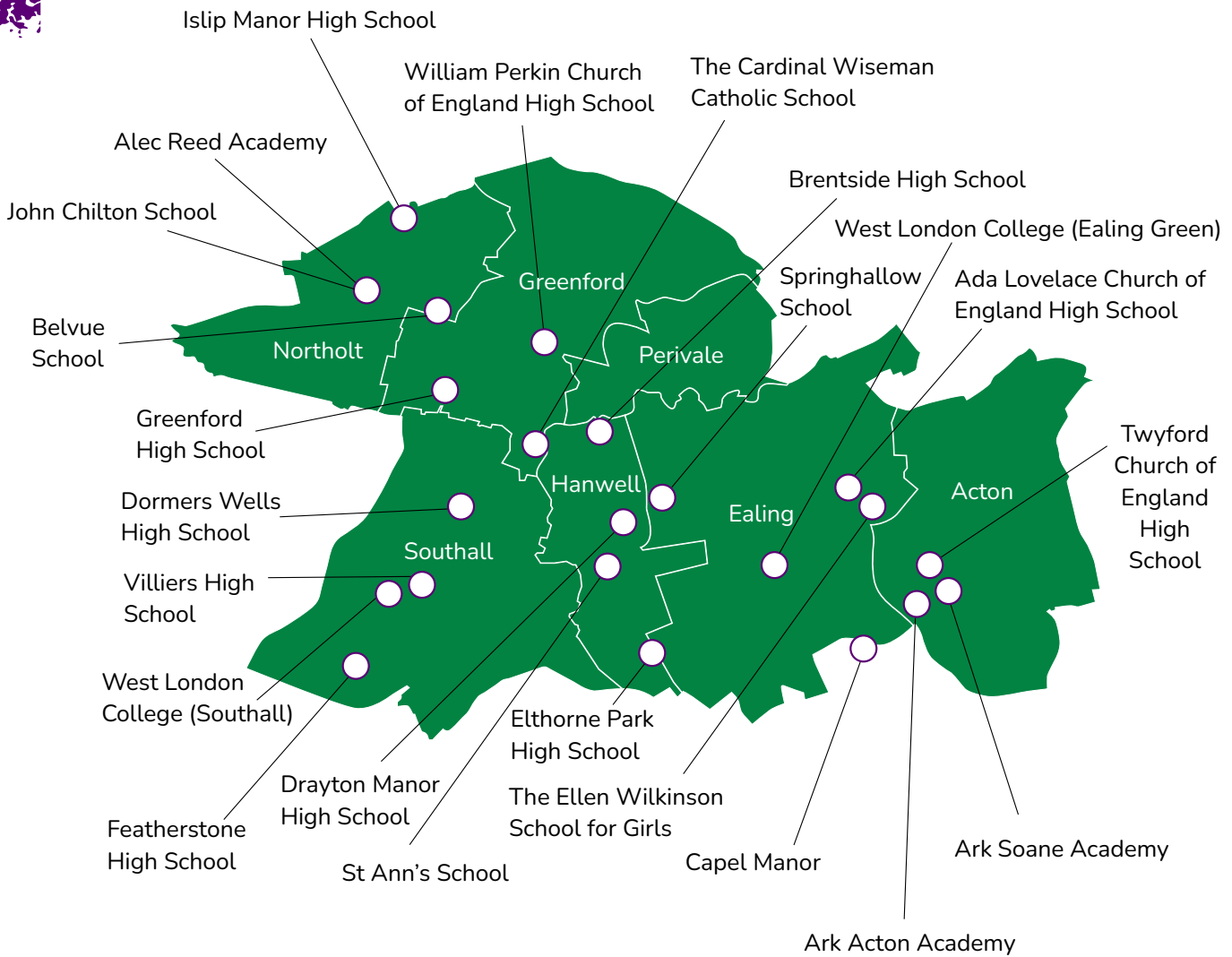
T: 020 8748 6969

E: [info@wmsf.ac.uk](mailto:info@wmsf.ac.uk)

W: [William Morris Sixth Form - Home](#)



# Map of school sixth forms and colleges



## University and post-18 options

Looking ahead to when you turn 18, you will have more decisions to make about your next steps. One of your options may be moving into higher education. In 2025, around 4 in 10 (36.3%) 18-year-olds in the UK went on to higher education. All schools and colleges in the borough have strong links with higher education providers, including the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and other [Russell Group Universities](#). Sixth-form leaders and tutors have the knowledge and experience to guide you through the whole application process. This includes helping you choose the right course and university for your career goals, supporting you with your application form and personal statement, and, if needed, helping you prepare for interviews. On sixth form or college open day visits remember to find out more about their links with higher education institutions.

You can find out more about applying to university, and the huge range of courses on offer, by visiting the [UCAS website](#).

Deciding whether to go on to higher education—and what and where to study—can be some of the most important decisions you ever make and will need careful consideration. Take every opportunity you can to visit campuses and get involved in summer schools, masterclasses and other activities. These experiences will all help you to gain a greater understanding of what studying at university is all about.

### The pros and cons of university

#### The pros

- a degree can help get your career started whilst increasing your earning potential
- some professions require a degree, for example, medicine
- you can do a deep dive and grow your passion for your chosen subject
- further develop 'soft skills' highly valued by employers, including critical thinking and problem-solving
- you can grow as a person, make new friends from diverse backgrounds, live independently and learn how to look after yourself

#### The cons

- for most people, going to university involves taking out a loan to cover tuition fees and living costs. The average amount of debt for people in England who finished their course last year was £53,000, but the actual amount you pay back in total may far exceed this when factoring in interest. It's really important to understand [how student finance works](#) and whether it's the right choice for you
- it can be a big jump from A levels to degree level study – you'll have to do a lot more independent studying

- degrees require a 3 to 4 year commitment, delaying entry into the workforce and potential earnings
- academic pressure, exams and tight deadlines can be stressful
- a degree does not guarantee a job and graduates could be overqualified for their position
- living independently can be overwhelming for some people, with the possibility of loneliness, however, most universities will offer great support to help you settle in

## Alternatives to university

University is not the only option open to you post 18. You've got other options. Lots of them.

- a [gap year](#) is a good option if you're unsure what you want to do next for example, studying at university or completing a degree apprenticeship. You might feel unsure about moving away from home, or you may simply want a break from exams. Taking a gap year gives you time and space between sixth form or college and whatever you choose to do next. It's a chance to try something different, ideally something that will boost your CV, help you build new skills, and support your personal growth. This could include getting a paid job, volunteering, travelling, or exploring new interests and activities
- you can simply [start working](#). There are lots of companies looking for sixth form or college leavers to take on and train as part of their organisation. Finding work straight after sixth form or college can offer immediate financial independence, work experience and no student debt. However, finding employment is a competitive process, so it's important you are 'job ready' with a strong CV and prepared for interviews
- apprenticeships were covered earlier in this guide (pages 21-23) and can help you 'learn as you earn', but post 18 you will have access, depending on your qualifications to additional levels (4 and above)

## Degree apprenticeships

If you'd like to pursue degree level study (level 6) while gaining a head start in your chosen career, then a degree apprenticeship could be for you. Degree apprenticeships take 3 to 6 years to complete, depending on the course level and career sector, and can provide an alternative route to university. They offer pathways into a wide range of industries, from engineering and science to law, marketing, and digital roles.

## The pros and cons of a degree apprenticeship

### The pros

- your degree is fully paid for, so there's no cost to you
- you will be paid throughout your apprenticeship with employers offering an average salary of £24,000 a year
- you will gain 3 to 6 years work experience in your chosen industry, which you wouldn't get at university
- career advancement with 77% of participants being kept on by their employer on completion or gaining immediate career progression

### The cons

- competition for degree apprenticeships can be fierce with rigorous recruitment processes. Acceptance rates can be lower than 1%
- you will have to balance your career with studying, which can be very demanding
- you don't always get the traditional 'university experience'
- training is often highly specific to one industry. If you decide you dislike the field, changing paths can be harder compared to having a broader, traditional degree



## Financial support and help (aged 16 to 19)

You don't have to pay any course fees if you stay in education or training at a school, college or with a training provider and you're under 19. However, depending on what you choose to do, you may be able to get financial support to help with costs such as travel, meals, equipment or childcare. The type of support you can receive will depend on your personal or family circumstances.

### Vulnerable student bursary

You could get a [vulnerable student bursary](#) worth up to £1,200 per year depending on your circumstances. This may be an option if you are:

- in care or have recently left local authority care
- receiving income support
- disabled and receive an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name

### Discretionary bursary

A [discretionary bursary](#) is a possible option if you need financial help but don't qualify for a vulnerable student bursary. Your education or training provider decides how much you get and what it's used for.

### How to claim

- apply directly to your post-16 school, college or training provider
- ask student services or your tutor to explain what you need to do. Your tutor or student services can help you decide if you're eligible for a bursary and explain how to apply
- contact the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) if your tutor or student services cannot answer your question

Your provider will decide how you get your bursary. You might be:

- paid in full or in instalments
- paid in cash, by cheque or through a bank account
- given things like a travel pass, free meals or books instead of money

Some providers also offer one-off payments to cover study trips or travel for university interviews.

## When to apply

Once you know where you're going to study or train, get your application in so you can receive your bursary quickly. You might need to reapply each year, so it's best to check with your post-16 provider.

## Care to Learn

Care to Learn helps with childcare costs while you study. You can apply if you're under 20 at the start of your course, have at least one child, and are enrolled on a publicly funded course in England. You may be awarded up to £195 per child per week, if living in London to assist with childcare costs. You can't get this funding if you're doing a paid apprenticeship or doing a higher education course, for example at university or college.

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

## Residential Bursary Fund

The Residential Bursary Fund can help with the cost of term-time accommodation if you're in further education and your course is too far to travel from home. However, you would need to meet the [criteria](#) before applying.

For general [money](#) and benefits advice visit [MONEY AND BENEFITS - Young Ealing](#)

# Where to get further information advice and support

## National Careers Service

If you are 13 or older and live in England you can get more information and advice about jobs, careers and training through the [National Careers Service](#). You can call on 0800 100 900 to speak to an adviser or use [webchat](#) to talk online. Calls are free from most landlines and mobiles and lines are open from:

- 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday
- 10am -5pm Saturdays and bank holidays

## Ealing Youth and Connexions Service

This service aims to empower and inspire young people to make positive life choices. [Ealing Youth and Connexions Services](#) are designed for young people in the borough aged 13-19 years and up to 25 years for those with additional needs. The services provide opportunities for young people to:

- gain new skills and qualifications
- have a say in issues affecting them
- get advice and support to prepare for the future
- have fun and make friends

## Ealing Local Offer

The [Local Offer](#) highlights all the services and provision available to children, young people and families 'locally' who are living with SEND.

The Local Offer website is a resource to help you understand what is available and how to access services and support. Ealing's Local Offer includes:

- links to SEND provision within all schools
- travel assistance
- preparing for adulthood (including housing, employment, support)
- SEN support for education

## Ealing Family Information Service

This service ensures that children, young people and families living in the borough, get the information, advice and guidance you need on all the local services and different types of support available to you. [Ealing Family Information Service](#) includes information on:

- childcare
- children's centres
- education
- family support including early help
- funding and benefits
- leisure activities
- SEND



## Useful Links

### Careers, advice and general information

- [Ealing Jobs & Skills Strategy](#)
- [Connexions – Young Ealing](#)
- [National Careers Service](#)
- [Prospects](#)
- [Careerpivot](#)
- [Post-16 Options \(Careerpivot\)](#)
- [Post-16 Options \(National Careers Service\)](#)
- [Post-16 Options \(UCAS\)](#)

### Apprenticeships, jobs and experience

- [Apprenticeships \(Gov\)](#)
- [Apply for an Apprenticeship](#)
- [Browse Apprenticeships](#)
- [Ealing Apprenticeships Portal](#)
- [Ealing Council Careers](#)
- [Indeed – Part-time jobs \(Ealing\)](#)
- [Find Volunteering Opportunities \(NCVO\)](#)
- [Work Experience \(National Careers Service\)](#)

### Local opportunities and activities

- [What's on in Ealing](#)

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### Education and SEND support

- [Supported Internships Guide \(West London\)](#)
- [Home Education – Ealing Council](#)
- [Cambridge Nationals](#)
- [NVQs](#)
- [Universities that accept T levels](#)
- [V levels](#)
- [Russell Group Universities](#)
- [How student finance works](#)
- [Gap year](#)
- [Local Offer](#)

### Financial support

- [16–19 Bursary Fund](#)
- [Care to Learn](#)
- [Residential Bursary Fund](#)
- [Benefits \(Gov UK\)](#)
- [Barnardo's Money Support](#)
- [Bank account](#)

### Higher education

- [Universities accepting T Levels](#)
- [Choose your future | UCAS](#)



London Borough of  
**Ealing**

